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Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method ~~for providing a forum for user interaction~~, comprising:  
creating one or more clones of ~~the forum~~ a first forum for user interaction, wherein the first forum is dedicated to a particular topic, and wherein each clone is an instance of the first forum, thereby allowing any number of users to be in the same forum dedicated to the particular topic while limiting the number of users in each instance of the first forum;  
determining whether a relationship exists between a user entering the first forum and one or more other users entering the first forum or one or more other users already in the first forum;  
and  
if a relationship exists, placing the user entering the first forum in a clone of the first forum based on the relationship.
2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
receiving information from the user entering the first forum indicating one or more other forums the user has been in, wherein each other forum is dedicated to a topic different from that of the first forum;  
receiving information from one or more other users indicating one or more forums each of the other users has been in, wherein each other forums each of the other users has been in is dedicated to a topic different from that of the first forum; and  
determining that a relationship exists between the user entering the first forum and another user if the user and the other user both have been in the same second forum, the second forum being different from the first forum ~~the user is entering~~.

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3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving information from the user entering the first forum indicating what clones of what forums the user has been in, wherein each of the forums the user has been in is dedicated to a respective topic;

receiving information from one or more other users indicating what clones of what forums each of the other users has been in, wherein each of the forums each of the other users has been in is dedicated to a respective topic; and

determining that a relationship exists between the user entering the first forum and another user if the user and the other user both have been in the same clone of a second forum, the second forum being different from the first forum.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

receiving information from the user entering the first forum indicating the domain name of the user's address;

receiving information from one or more other users indicating the domain names of the addresses of each of the other users; and

determining that a relationship exists between the user entering the first forum and another user if the user entering the first forum and the other user both have the same domain name.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving information from the user entering the first forum indicating a country associated with the user's address;

receiving information from one or more other users indicating a country associated with each of the other user's addresses; and

determining that a relationship exists between the user entering the first forum and another user if the user entering the first forum and the other user both have addresses associated with the same country.

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6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
- receiving information from the user entering the first forum indicating a language in which the user prefers to communicate;
  - receiving information from one or more other users indicating a language in which each of the other users prefers to communicate; and
  - determining that a relationship exists between the user entering the first forum and another user if the user entering the first forum and the other user prefer to communicate in the same language.
7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
- receiving an indication from the user entering the first forum or from one or more other users that a relationship exists between the user entering the first forum and one or more other users.
8. (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein placing the user in a clone includes placing the user in a clone other than a clone containing a designated user with whom a relationship exists.
9. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein placing the user in a clone includes placing the user in a clone with another user with whom a relationship exists.
10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein placing the user in a clone includes placing the user in the clone with another user with whom a relationship exists and who most recently entered the first forum.
11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising limiting the number of users in each instance of the first forum to a maximum number.

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12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
    limiting the number of users in each instance of the first forum to a threshold number, except if a relationship exists between the user entering the first forum and one or more other users; and  
    placing the user entering the first forum in a clone with more than the threshold number of users only if a relationship exists between the user and one or more of the other users in the clone or entering the clone.
13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12, further comprising:  
    receiving information from the user entering the first forum indicating what clones of what forums the user has been in;  
    receiving information from one or more other users indicating what clones of what forums each of the other users has been in; and  
    determining that a relationship exists between the user entering the first forum and another user if the user and the other user both have been in the same clone of a the same forum.
14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the first forum comprises an interactive forum maintained by a system of one or more computers in which users interact by submitting messages and reading messages from other users as they are submitted.
15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the first forum comprises an interactive virtual world maintained by a system of one or more computers where users interact by moving avatars, each user having one or more avatars in the virtual world, and observing the movement of the avatars in the virtual world.

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16. (Currently Amended) A computer system ~~for providing a forum for user interaction~~ comprising:

means for sending and receiving content to and from a network;

means coupled to means for sending and receiving content for creating one or more clones of ~~the forum~~ a first forum for user interaction, wherein the first forum is dedicated to a particular topic, and wherein each clone is an instance of the first forum, thereby allowing any number of users to be in the same forum dedicated to the particular topic while limiting the number of users in each instance of the first forum; and

means coupled to means for sending and receiving content for determining whether a relationship exists between a user entering the first forum and one or more other users entering the first forum or one or more other users already in the first forum and, if a relationship exists, placing the user entering the first forum in a clone of the first forum based on the relationship.

17. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 16, further comprising:

means for receiving information from the user entering the first forum indicating one or more other forums the user has been in, wherein each other forum is dedicated to a topic different from that of the first forum;

means for receiving information from one or more other users indicating one or more forums each of the other users has been in, wherein each other forums each of the other users has been in is dedicated to a topic different from that of the first forum; and

means for determining that a relationship exists between the user entering the first forum and another user if the user and the other user both have been in the same second forum, the second forum being different from the first forum the user is entering.

18. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 16, further comprising

means for receiving information from the user entering the first forum indicating what clones of what forums the user has been in, wherein each of the forums the user has been in is dedicated to a respective topic;

means for receiving information from one or more other users indicating what clones of what

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forums each of the other users has been in, wherein each of the forums the other users has been in is dedicated to a respective topic; and

means for determining that a relationship exists between the user entering the first forum and another user if the user and the other user both have been in the same clone of a second forum, the second forum being different from the forum the user is entering.

19. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 16 further comprising:

means for receiving information from the user entering the first forum indicating the domain name of the user's address;

means for receiving information from one or more other users indicating the domain names of the addresses of each of the other users; and

means for determining that a relationship exists between the user entering the first forum and another user if the user entering the first forum and the other user both have the same domain name.

20. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 16, further comprising:

means for receiving information from the user entering the first forum indicating a country associated with the user's address;

means for receiving information from one or more other users indicating a country associated with each of the other user's addresses; and

means for determining that a relationship exists between the user entering the first forum and another user if the user entering the first forum and the other user both have addresses associated with the same country.

21. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 16, further comprising:

means for receiving information from the user entering the first forum indicating a language in which the user prefers to communicate;

means for receiving information from one or more other users indicating a language in which each of the other users prefers to communicate; and

means for determining that a relationship exists between the user entering the first forum

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and another user if the user entering the first forum and the other user prefer to communicate in the same language.

22. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 16, further comprising means for receiving an indication from the user entering the first forum or from one or more other users that a relationship exists between the user entering the first forum and one or more other users.

23. (Original) The system of claim 22 wherein placing the user in a clone includes placing the user in a clone other than a clone containing a designated user with whom a relationship exists.

24. (Original) The system of claim 16 wherein placing the user in a clone includes placing the user in a clone with another user with whom a relationship exists.

25. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 16 wherein placing the user in a clone includes placing the user in the clone with another user with whom a relationship exists and who most recently entered the first forum.

26. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 16, further comprising means for limiting the number of users in each instance of the first forum to a maximum number.

27. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 16, further comprising:

means for limiting the number of users in each instance of the first forum to a threshold number, except if a relationship exists between the user entering the first forum and one or more other users; and

means for placing the user entering the first forum in a clone with more than the threshold number of users only if a relationship exists between the user and one or more of the other users in the clone or entering the clone.

28. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 27, further comprising:

means for receiving information from the user entering the first forum indicating what clones of what forums the user has been in;

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means for receiving information from one or more other users indicating what clones of what forums each of the other users has been in; and

means for determining that a relationship exists between the user entering the first forum and another user if the user and the other user both have been in the same clone of a the same forum.

29. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 16 wherein the first forum comprises an interactive forum maintained by a system of one or more computers in which users interact by submitting messages and reading messages from other users as they are submitted.

30. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 16 wherein the first forum comprises an interactive virtual world maintained by a system of one or more computers where users interact by moving avatars, each user having one or more avatars in the virtual world, and observing the movement of the avatars in the virtual world.

31. (New) A method, comprising:

creating one or more clones of a forum for user interaction, wherein each clone is an instance of the forum, thereby allowing any number of users to be in the same forum while limiting the number of users in each instance of the forum;

determining whether a relationship exists between a user entering the forum and one or more other users entering the forum or one or more other users already in the forum; and

if a relationship exists, placing the user entering the forum in a clone of the forum based on the relationship;

limiting the number of users in each instance of the forum to a threshold number, except if a relationship exists between the user entering the forum and one or more other users; and

placing the user entering the forum in a clone with more than the threshold number of users only if a relationship exists between the user and one or more of the other users in the clone or entering the clone.



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32. (New) The method of claim 31, further comprising:

receiving information from the user entering the forum indicating what clones of what forums the user has been in;

receiving information from one or more other users indicating what clones of what forums each of the other users has been in; and

determining that a relationship exists between the user entering the forum and another user if the user and the other user both have been in the same clone of a forum.

33. (New) A computer system comprising:

means for sending and receiving content to and from a network;

means coupled to means for sending and receiving content for creating one or more clones of a forum for user interaction, wherein each clone is an instance of the forum, thereby allowing any number of users to be in the same forum while limiting the number of users in each instance of the forum;

means coupled to means for sending and receiving content for determining whether a relationship exists between a user entering the forum and one or more other users entering the forum or one or more other users already in the forum and, if a relationship exists, placing the user entering the forum in a clone of the forum based on the relationship

means for limiting the number of users in each instance of the forum to a threshold number, except if a relationship exists between the user entering the forum and one or more other users; and

means for placing the user entering the forum in a clone with more than the threshold number of users only if a relationship exists between the user and one or more of the other users in the clone or entering the clone.

34. (New) The system of claim 33, further comprising:

means for receiving information from the user entering the forum indicating what clones of what forums the user has been in;

means for receiving information from one or more other users indicating what clones of

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what forums each of the other users has been in; and

means for determining that a relationship exists between the user entering the forum and another user if the user and the other user both have been in the same clone of a forum.

35. (New) A method, comprising:

creating a first world and a distinct second world, wherein each world is a distinct 3D virtual world that presents a 3D graphical scene to users, and wherein multiple users may enter and navigate each 3D virtual world and may interact by moving avatars, interacting and observing the world and other users;

creating two or more clones of the first world and two or more clones of the second world, wherein each clone is an instance of the respective world, allowing any number of users to be in the same world while limiting the number of users in each clone of the world;

receiving information from a user entering the first world indicating what clones of what distinct worlds the user has been in;

receiving information from one or more other users indicating what clones of what distinct worlds each of the other users has been in; and

determining that a relationship exists between the user entering the first world and another user if the user and the other user both have been in the same clone of the same world; and

if a relationship exists, placing the user entering the first world in a clone of the first world based on the relationship.

36. (New) A system, comprising:

means for creating a first world and a distinct second world, wherein each world is a distinct 3D virtual world that presents a 3D graphical scene to users, and wherein multiple users may enter and navigate each 3D virtual world and may interact by moving avatars, interacting and observing the world and other users;

means for creating two or more clones of the first world and two or more clones of the second world, wherein each clone is an instance of the respective world, allowing any number of

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users to be in the same world while limiting the number of users in each clone of the world;  
means for receiving information from a user entering the first world indicating what clones of what distinct worlds the user has been in;

means for receiving information from one or more other users indicating what clones of what distinct worlds each of the other users has been in; and

means for determining that a relationship exists between the user entering the first world and another user if the user and the other user both have been in the same clone of the same world; and

means for placing the user entering the first world, if a relationship exists, in a clone of the first world based on the relationship.

37. (New) The method of claim 1:

wherein the relationship is a group membership relationship;

the method further comprising receiving an indication from the user entering the forum or from one or more other users that a group membership relationship exists between the user entering the forum and the one or more other users.

38. (New) The system of claim 1:

wherein the relationship is a group membership relationship;

the system further comprising means for receiving an indication from the user entering the forum or from one or more other users that a group membership relationship exists between the user entering the forum and the one or more other users.